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UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 002710

SIPDIS

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TAGS: KMDR KPAO OIIP OPRC PGOV PREL PK

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: TERRORISM/MILITARY, POLITICAL, ECON/BUSINESS, MISCELLANEOUS - NOVEMBER 10, 2009

Summary: Reports of a suicide attack in Peshawar (3 dead, 5 injured) received extensive coverage in all dailies on Tuesday. Newspapers also reported that the death toll in Sunday's suicide attack in Matni (on the outskirts of Peshawar) reached 18. Some dailies ran the U.S. Embassy's statement condemning the incident. Several major newspapers quoted Afghan warlord Gulbadin Hikmatyar as saying that "Usama Bin is still alive." Commenting on the alleged Indian proxy war with Pakistan using Afghanistan as a base, "The Nation," observed that "the U.S., which is leading war against terrorism, must also be asked to keep the Indians on a tight rein." End Summary.

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: Rickshaw Bomber Kills Three In Peshawar "The News" (11/10)

"Three people, including a policeman, were killed and five others sustained injuries in Peshawar on Monday when a suicide bomber riding an auto-rickshaw blew himself up at a police barricade on the Ring Road in the Latifabad area. This was the second suicide bombing in Peshawar during the last 24 hours. Also, the death toll in the Sunday's suicide attack in Matni reached 18, as three critically wounded villagers succumbed to their injuries at the Lady Reading Hospital (LRH)."

News Story: Usama Is Still Alive: Hikmatyar "Daily Times" (11/10)

"Hezb-e-Islami chief Gulbadin Hikmatyar has said that Osama Bin Laden is still alive, a private TV channel reported on Monday. Speaking in a video message, Hikmatyar said the U.S. would be given 'safe exit' if it decided to pull out of Afghanistan. 'Al Qaeda's 'wrong' strategy was the reason the Taliban were toppled,' he said."

News Story: U.S. Flays Terror Strikes In Peshawar "The Frontier Post" (11/10)

"the United States has condemned the terrorist strikes in Adezai Village and Monday at a police check-point in Peshawar that killed and injured many innocent Pakistanis. According to Jeremiah Knight, Acting spokesman of U.S. Embassy, United States has extended its sympathies to the victims of those attacks and the families and friends of those who lost their lives in these attacks."

News Story: Army Consolidates Gains In Waziristan "Dawn" (11/10)

"Twenty Taliban insurgents have been killed as military tried to consolidate gains in its offensive against militants in South Waziristan, the army said on Sunday. Pakistan launched a punishing air and ground offensive in the region bordering Afghanistan on October 17, with 30,000 troops backed by fighter jets and helicopter gunships laying siege to Taliban bolt-holes."

News Story: 18 Taliban, 7 Soldiers Killed In FATA Violence "Daily Times" (11/10)

"The army killed at least 18 more Taliban in South Waziristan, Kurram Agency and Bajaur Agency on Monday. 'Taliban fired rockets at a check-post in Makeen, South Waziristan ... killing four soldiers. Meanwhile, eight Taliban were killed [in fighting],' said the ISPR, adding that security forces cleared Tauda China Khola and established a check-post near Makeen."

News Story: Nine Militants Die In Kurram Agency Blitz "The News" (11/10)

"Nine militants were killed and their 10 hideouts were destroyed when jetfighters blitzed different areas in central part of Kurram Agency on Monday.

News Story: TTP Names New Head For Khyber Agency "The News" (11/10)

"Tariq Afridi, the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) commander for Darra Adam Khel, has reportedly been appointed as the head of the banned organisation for Khyber Agency and the Matani area in the Peshawar district. The sources said Muhammad, the spokesman for the TTP in Darra Adam Khel, would also be the spokesman for the organisation for the Khyber Agency and the Matani area."

Editorial: Confronting Reality, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (11/10)

"The series of bomb blasts that keep occurring day after day in Peshawar indicate that the terrorists, though losing ground against Pakistan Army in South Waziristan, retain the strength to launch reprisal attacks.... Keeping in view the evidence that has been obtained, it is clear that India is engaged in a proxy war with Pakistan using Afghanistan as a base.... It could be much better if New Delhi is pressurized straightaway to give up backing terrorism inside Pakistan. The U.S., which is leading the war against terrorism, must also be asked to keep the Indians on a tight rein."

Editorial: Target Peshawar, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (11/10)

"While the military operation is going on, the terrorists may try to carry out such attacks whenever they get the chance. The enemy is determined and consistent in its extremist policy and will not give it up. The government, too, should remain determined in rooting out extremism by using military force. If peace is to be restored in Pakistan, militancy has to be crushed."

Opinion: Militants Open A New Front, an op-ed by Khadim Hussain in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (11/10)

"A Suicide attack in Adezai village on the outskirts of Peshawar on Sunday killed a number of people, including the Adezai nazim Abdul Malik. The attack appears to be part of a larger plan by the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan in and around Darra Adamkhel and their allies in Khyber Agency to demoralize the leadership and disrupt the local organized resistance to the militants' onslaught on Peshawar from the south and south-west of the city."

Opinion: Testing Times For Pakistan-U.S. Relations, an op-ed by Dr. Maleeha Lohdi in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (11/10)

"Unless the two countries can work out a way to cooperatively deal with the issues that will emerge in this complex process, the Congressional requirements will expose ties to repeated stress at a critical time for both nations. Pakistani and U.S. officials will

also have to work harder to convince each other, as well as their skeptical publics and legislatures, that their relationship has positive, intrinsic value and is not transactional and expedient, impelled by transient circumstances. The months ahead can either see the two countries setting about purposively to close their trust gap and give relations the consistency they have lacked or encounter more turbulence with deleterious and destabilizing effects on their relations."

Opinion: Parting Kick!, an op-ed by Nosheen Saeed in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (11/10)

"It is clear that Pakistanis don't want their country to be run by the Americans or President Obama's special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Mr. Richard Holbrooke. They take exception to the demeaning expression Af-Pak which turns them into a part of the problem; they don't want their country micromanaged through puppet regimes; they don't want to be a client state toeing US orders; they don't want U.S. aid with humiliating conditions; and they don't want to be slaves. They only want to be masters of their own destiny. That is all we want!"

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: with Zardari Busy In Survival, National Security Issues Ignored "The News" (11/10)

"Mistrust between the Presidency and the establishment is growing with every passing day as President Asif Ali Zardari is embroiled in his survival battles and top priority national security matters are being ignored. A top military general is said to have shared with his politician friend the view that some top security issues are not getting the kind of attention they deserve from the Presidency and the government."

News Story: Shujaat Claims Authorship Of NRO And Its Name "Dawn" (11/10)

"Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, the PML-Q chief, disclosed in an interview on Monday that the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) was his brainchild. The ordinance was promulgated in Oct 2007 by the government of then President Pervez Musharraf. "Yes, I proposed its name because I wanted it to be equally and universally applicable. We did not want only certain individuals to benefit. The idea behind the ordinance was national reconciliation and to let the democratic system function," Chaudhry Shujaat said in the interview with 'Dawn.'"

News Story: Aitzaz Says He Has Been Offered Senior Position "Dawn" (11/10)

"PPP leader and former president of the Supreme Court Bar Association Aitzaz Ahsan has confirmed reports that he has been offered a senior position in the government. Talking to newsmen after a ceremony marking the birth anniversary of Allama Iqbal on Monday, he avoided naming the position offered to him by saying that 'it will ruin peaceful nights of some people.'"

Opinion: Democracy In Danger, an op-ed by Mir Jamilur Rahman in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (11/10)

"President Zardari has startled the nation by revealing that since he became president 14 months ago, he has foiled three attempts to unseat him.... Nawaz Sharif has said time and again that he will not back any unconstitutional move to remove the government.... Fauzia Wahab, MNA and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Secretary Information, has acknowledged that the U.S. Ambassador could reverse government's decisions taken at the highest level. Thus it would hold true that Ann Patterson is not merely an Ambassador but U.S. viceroy in Pakistan.... If the U.S. envoy did intervene, then Ms. Wahab should have kept it secret because its disclosure has reflected badly on the president and the prime minister. However, it appears as a figment of her imagination that Nawaz Sharif was let off on the advice of the U.S. envoy."

ECON/BUSINESS

News Story: U.S. Committed To Pakistan: Holbrooke "Dawn" (11/10)

"The United States has committed itself to help improve Pakistan's ailing economy with a particular emphasis on assisting the country in dealing with the energy crisis, U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke said on Monday. Mr. Holbrooke, in an interview to CNN, said Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had made this commitment during her recent trip to Pakistan."

News Story: U.S. Aid May Be Disastrous: Minister "The News" (11/10)

"Federal Minister for Science and Technology Azam Sawati has said that Pakistan should enhance its relations with China instead of accepting aid from the United States, as this aid may take us to the verge of disaster. He was addressing the PCSIR (Pakistan Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) laboratories while having a one-day visit on Monday."

News Story: Saudi Arabia To Provide \$380m Soft Loan To Pakistan "The News" (11/10)

"Saudi Arabia, while honoring its commitment to the Government of Pakistan made at the Tokyo conference of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FoDP) and subsequent bilateral interaction, has come forward to provide assistance to Pakistan. The Saudi government has announced a tangible soft loan and funds to improve the balance of payments. (According to agencies, Saudi Arabia would give \$ 380 million as soft loan and budgetary support to Pakistan)."

MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: Blatant Violations Of Diplomatic Immunity! "The Nation" (11/10)

"Expressing deep concerns over blatant violations of diplomatic immunity, legal experts said on Monday that certain diplomatic missions were reportedly overstepping their mandated immunity. They specially referred to the U.S. outfit Backwater's murky activities in the country. 'Though for foreign missions a number of rules and regulations are relaxed but in certain cases they are required to fulfill certain conditions, including prior information to Pakistan Government about their travel and meetings' schedule with political and social dignitaries. However, in some cases these requirements are not fulfilled by the diplomats,' they observed."

News Story: Merkel Asks U.S. To Cast Aside Unilateralism "Dawn" (11/10)

"The United States should cede some of its powers to international organizations to create a 'world order', Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Monday in an unusually sharp criticism of Washington before she led world leaders through the Brandenburg Gate - the climax of ceremonies marking 20 years since the Berlin Wall came crashing down in 1989. 'We Europeans are used to this.... We have voluntarily given up many of our powers to Brussels and to the European Union,' said the German chancellor.

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson